

ben the customes of perturbaciouns, and this power they han, that they may move a man out of his place, that is to seyn, fro the stablenes & perfeccioun of his knowinge; but, certes, they may nat alarace him, ne aliene him in al. But I wolde that thou woldest answer to this: remembrestow that thou art a man?

Whysholde I nat remembre that? quod I. Maystow nat telle me thanne, quod she, what thing is a man?

NEXSTOW me nat, quod I, whether that I be a resonable mortal beest? I woot wel, & I confesse wel that I am it. Mistestow never yit that thou were any other thing? quod she.

No, quod I.

NOW woot I, quod she, other cause of thy maladye, and that right grete. Thou hast left for to knowen thyself, what thou art; thorough which I have pleyntly founden the cause of thy maladye, or elles the entree of recoveringe of thyn hele. for why, for thou art confounded with foryeting of thyself, forthy sorwes tow that thou art exiled of thy propre goodes. And for thou ne wost what is the ende of thynges, forthy demestow that felonous and wikked men ben mighty and weleful. And for thou hast foryeten by which governements the world is governed, forthy weneestow that this mutaciouns of fortune fleten withoute governour. Thise ben grete causes not only to maladye, but, certes, grete causes to deeth. But I thanke the auctor and the maker of hele, that nature hath not al forleten thee. I have grete norissinges of thyn hele, and that is, the sothe sentence of governaunce of the world; that thou bilevest that the governinge of it nis nat subject ne underput to the folie of thise happes aventureous, but to the resoun of God. And therfor doute

DE CONSOLATIONE PHILOSOPHIE. BOOK II. PROSE I.

Postea paulisper contineat.

AFTER THIS SHE STINTE A LITTEL; AND, AFTER THAT SHE HADDE GADERED BY ATEMPRE stillenesse myn atencioni, she seide thus: (As who mighte seyn thus: After thise thynges she stinte a litel; and whan she aperceived by atempre stillenesse that I was ententif to herkene hir, she bigan to speke in this wyse): Yif I, quod she, have understanden and knowen outrely the causes and the habit of thy maladye, thou languisest

thee nothing; for of this litel spark thyn hete of lyf shal shyne.

BUT for as moche as it is nat time yit of faster remedies, and the nature of thoughtes deceived is this, that as ofte as they casten away sothe opiniouns, which false opiniouns the derkenesse of perturbacioun wexeth up, that confoundeth the verray insight: & that derkenesse shal I assaye somewhat to maken thynne & wayk by lighte and meneliche remedies; so that, after that the derkenesse of deceyvinge desiringes is don away, thou move knowe the shyninge of verray light.

Metre VII.

Nubibus atris.

NHE sterres, covered with blaie cloudes, ne mowen yeten adoun no light. Yif the trouble wind that hight Huster, turning & walwinge the see, medleth the hete, that is to seyn, the boyling up from the botme; the waves, that whylom weren clere as glas & lyke to the faire clere dayes, withstande anon the sightes of men by the filthe and ordure that is resolved. And the fleting stream, that royleth doun dyversly fro heyemountaignes, is arested and resisted ofte tyme by the encounteringe of a stoon that is departed and fallen from som roche.

AND forthy, yif thou wolt loken and demen sooth with cleer light, and holden the wey with a right path, weyvet thou joye, dryf fro thee drede, flemethou hope, ne lat no sorwe aproche; that is to seyn, lat non of thise four passaciouns overcomen thee or blende thee. for cloudy and derke is thilke thought, and bounde with brydles, wheras thise thynges regnen.

Explicit Liber Primus.

and art defeted for desyr and talent of thy rather fortune. She, that ilke fortune only, that is chaunged, as thou feynest, to theeward, hath perverted the cleer nesse and the estat of thy courage. I understonde the felefolde colours and decettes of thilke merveilous monstre fortune, & how she useth ful flateringe familiaritee with hem that she enforeth to bigyle; so longe, til that she confounde with unsufferable sorwe hem that she hath left in despeyr unpurveyed. And yif thou remembrest wel the kinde, the maneres, and the desert of thilke fortune, thou shalt wel knowe that, as in hir, thou never ne haddest ne hast ylost any fair thing. But, as I trowe, I shal nat gretly travailen to do the remem-

ber on these thynges. for thou were wont to hurtelen and despyse hir, with manly wordes, whan she was blaundissinge and present, & purswedest hir with sentences that were drawn out of myn entree, that is to seyn, out of myn informacioun. But no godein mutacioun ne bitydeth nat withoute a manere chaunginge of corages; and so is it befallen that thou art a litel departed fro the pees of thy thought.

BUT now is tyme that thou drinke and ataste some softe and delitable thynges; so that, whan they ben entred within thee, it mowe maken wey to strengere dringes of medicynes. Com now forth therfore the suasion of swete nesse rethorien, which that goth only the right wey, whyl she forsaketh nat myne estatute. And with Rhetorice com forth Musice, a damisel of our hous, that singeth now lighter moedes or prolaciouns, now heyer. What cyleth thee, man? What is it that hath cast thee into morninge and into wepinge? I trowe that thou hast seyn som new thing and uncouth. Thou weneest that fortune be chaunged ayein thee; but thou weneest wrong, yif thou that wene. Alwey the ben hir maneres; she hath rather kept, as to theeward, hir propre stablenesse in the chaunginge of hirself. Right swich was she whan she flattered thee, & deceived thee with unlewful lykings of fals weleful nesse. Thou hast now knowen and ataynt the doutous or double visage of thilke blinde goddesse fortune. She, that yit covereth hir and wimpleth hir to other folk, hath shewed hir everydel to thee. Yif thou aprovest hir and thenkest that she is good, use hir maneres and pleyne thee nat. And yif thou agrysest hir false trecherye, despyse and cast away hir that pleyeth so harmfully; for she, that is now cause of so muche sorwe to thee, sholde ben cause to thee of pees & of joye. She hath forsaken thee, forsothe; the which that never man may ben siker that shene shal forsake him. **Glose.** But natheles, some bokes han the text thus: for sothe, she hath forsaken thee, ne ther nis no man siker that she ne hath nat forsaken.

OLDESTOW than thilke weleful nesse precious to thee that shal passen? And is present fortune dereworth to thee, which that nis nat feithful for to dwelle; and, whan she goth away, that she bringeth a wight in sorwe? for sin she may nat ben withholden at a mannes wille, she maketh him a wrecche whan she departeth fro him. What other thing is flittinge fortune but a maner shewing of wrecchednesse that is to comen? Ne it ne suffyseth not only to loken on thinge that is present bifore the eyen of a man. But

wisdom loketh and amesureth the ende of thynges; & the same chaunginge from oon into another, that is to seyn, from adversitee into prosperitee, maketh that the manaces of fortune ne ben not for to dreden, ne the flateringes of hir to ben desired. Thus, at the laste, it bihoveth thee to suffer with evene wille in pacience al that is don inwith the floor of fortune, that is to seyn, in this world, sin thou hast ones put thynekke under the yok of hir. for yif thou wolt wryten a lawe of wendinge & of dwellinge to fortune, which that thou hast chosen frely to ben thy lady, artow nat wrongful in that, & makest fortune wroth and aspere by thyn inpatience, & yit thou mayst nat chaunge hir?

If thou committest and bitakest thy sailes to the winde, thou shalt be shoven, not thider that thou woldest, but whider that the wind shoveth thee. Yif thou castest thy sedes into the felde, thou sholdest han in minde that the yeres ben, amonges, otherwhyle plenteuous and otherwhyle bareyne. Thou hast bitaken thyself to the governaunce of fortune, and forthy it bihoveth thee to ben obeisaunt to the maneres of thy lady. Enforecest thou thee to aresten or withholden the swift nesse & the sweigh of hir turninge whele? O thou fool of alle mortal foolles, if fortune bigan to dwelle stable, she cesede thanne to ben fortune!

Metre I.

Hec cum superba verterit vices dextra.

WHAN fortune with a proud right hand hath torded hir chaunginge stoundes, she fareth lyk the maneres of the boilinge Eurype. **Glose.** Eurype is an arm of the see that ebbeth and floweth; and somtyme the stream is on o syde, and somtyme on the other. **Text.** She, cruel fortune, casteth adoun kinges that whylom weren ydrad; & she, deceivable, enhaunseth up the humble chere of him that is discomfited. Ne she neither hereth ne rekketh of wrecchede wepinges; & she is so hard that she laugheth and scorneth the wepinges of hem, the which she hath makid wepe with hir free wille. Thus she pleyeth, & thus she prooveth hir strengthes; and sheweth a greet wonder to alle hir servautes, yif that a wight is seyn weleful, and overthrowe in an houre.

Boethius de Consolatione Philosophie. Book II.